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"Infant Baptism,"

WHEN-WHERE-WHY

INSTITUTED.

BY

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MATTHEW, 15. 6 & 9. "THUS HAVE YE MADE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT BY YOUR TRADITION." "TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN."

In discussing the history of "Infant Baptism," I will first ask you to listen to the declarations of *six representative* men of the six great bodies who practice infant sprinkling
First, *Roman Catholic.*

Archbishop Hughes of New York, wrote in his "Doctrinal Catechism," "It does not appear from Scripture, *that one infant was ever baptized* : therefore Protestants should reject, on their own principles, infant baptism as an unscriptural usage."
Second, *Episcopalian.*

The Late Bishop of Salisbury, England, wrote these words, "I most candidly and broadly state my conviction, that there is *not one passage*, nor *one word in Scripture*, which directly proves it, (infant baptism) not one word, the undeniable and logical power of which can be adduced to prove in any way of fact, that in the Scripture age infants were baptized, or of the doctrine that *they ought to be baptized.*"
Third, *Lutheran.*

Martin Luther, "The Solitary monk who shook the world," says, "It *cannot be proved by the Sacred Scriptures*, that infant baptism was instituted by Christ."
Fourth, *Presbyterian.*

Dr. Phillip Schaff says, "There is the *absence* of *precept* or *example* for infant baptism in the New Testament and "the A*postolic origin* of infant baptism is denied, not only by the Baptists, but also by many pedo-baptist divines."
Fifth, *Congregationalist.*

Dr. Leonard Woods says, "Whatever may have been the precepts of Christ, or of His Apostles, to those who enjoyed their personal instructions, it is plain that there is *no express precept* respecting infant baptism in our sacred writings. The proof, then, that infant baptism is a divine institution, *must be made out in another way*".
Sixth, *Methodist Epis.*

Dr. A. T. Bledsoe says "with all our searching we have

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been *unable to find in the New Testament a single express declaration* or word, in favour of infant baptism."

As the Presbyterians are the last to depart from their traditions, received from the fathers, I would like to add one more voice to the preceding six, which is that of their great Founder John Calvin. He says, "*It is nowhere expressed by the Evangelists, that any one infant was baptized.*"

A Roman Catholic Priest and a Congregational Minister agreed to hold a public discussion, in which the Minister should prove from the Bible that his creed was founded on the Bible, and that the Priest's was founded on tradition. They met before a large audience composed of both protestants and catholics.

The wily Priest asked the Minister to quote chapter and verse, where it is *commanded* to sprinkle an infant, or an *example* of one having been sprinkled. The Minister shuffled around certain passages, which he said "*implied*" infant sprinkling; but was unable to quote a *single verse* where it is distinctly stated that an infant *should be*, or *was sprinkled.*

Said the Priest, "Sir, you cannot find a single verse in the whole of the New Testament, from which you can get either *authority* or *example*, to *sprinkle infants.* The real fact is, you *get your infant sprinkling from us*, the Roman Catholics. We do not go to the Bible for our doctrines, but to the councils of the Church, as we believe the Church is above the Bible."

Of course the catholic portion of the audience applauded their champion, and as his antagonist *had failed to prove his first point from the Bible*, the Priest refused to pursue the discussion any further, considering that he had gained all the victory necessary, over his antagonist.

If infant sprinkling *is not in the New Testament*, and the greatest Scholars of past ages, and all of the present age, say it is *not there*, how did it come to pass that it became *a substitute for the baptism that is there*? That question I will now proceed to answer. When, where, and why was sprinkling used as a substitute for immersion? The learned Curcellæus says, "The custom of baptizing infants *did not begin before the third age after Christ was born.* In the former ages no trace of it appears.....It was introduced *without the com-*

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maud of Christ, and therefore this rite (infant baptism) is observed by us as an *ancient custom* but *not as an apostolic tradition*."

That Prince of Exegetes Dr. H. A. W. Meyer says, "The baptism of the children of christians, of which *no trace* is found in the New Testament, is *not to be held as an apostolic ordinance*, as indeed, it encountered early and long resistance; but it is an *institution of the Church* which gradually arose after the Apostle's times, in connection with the developement of ecclesiastical life, and of doctorinal teaching, not certainly attested before Tertullian (Tertullian died between 220-240) and by him decidedly opposed."

Dr. Augustus Neander, than whom no greater historian has yet written on the early history of Christianity, says in his Church History, "Baptism, at first, was administered only to adults as men were accustomed to conceive *baptism and faith as strictly connected*. There does not appear to be *any reason* for deriving infant baptism from an Apostolical institution; and the recognition of it, which followed somewhat later, as an apostolic tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis.

Those who are called the Apostolic Fathers, and who wrote in the first century, were five in number. Their names are Barnabas, Hermas, Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Of all these only the epistle of Clemens Romanus can be relied on as genuine. He says, "They are *right subjects of baptism*, who have passed through an *examinatiou and instruction*," and "the baptized ought to be *children in malice*, but *not iu understanding;* even such children who, as the children of God, have put off the old man with the garment of wickedness, and have put on the new man." If any man can find helpless infants there, he must put them there. In all the writings of the first century, not one word can be found that recognizes the existance of infant baptism in the first hundred years of Christianity. For the learned Martin Luther, who was no great Friend of the Baptists was bound to acknowledge that, "It cannot be proved by the sacred Scripture, that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun *by the first Christians after the Apostle's*."

Who is the Pedo-baptist that will be so bold as to say he can find a distinct declaration that helpless infants were bap-

tized in the *second* century? The principal christian writers of that century were Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, Minucius Felix, Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria. And in all their writings there is only one man's that Pedo-baptists care to appeal to, in which they think they can see infant baptism. Justin Martyr lived about A. D. 140 or 150, and here is one passage he wrote, which Pedo-baptists like so much. "As many as are persuaded and *do believe* that those things which are taught and spoken by us are true, and engaged to live accordingly, are instructed to pray.....and are then led to a place where there is water." Instead of commenting on that extract myself, I quote what a German Theologian of Halle, Dr. Johann Semler, says. "From Justin Martyr's description of baptism, we learn that it was *administered only to adults.* He says we were (corporeally) born without our will.....but in *baptism* are to have *choice, knowledge,* &c. *This we learned from the Apostles.*" From Semisch's "Life and times of Justin Martyr," we read "whenever Justin Martyr refers to baptism, *adults* appear as the objects to whom the sacred rite is administered. *Of infant baptism he knows nothing.* The traces of it, which some persons believe they have detected in his writings are *groundless fancies, artificially produced.*" Here is another passage from Justin Martyr, in which Pedo-baptists think they see infant baptism. "Several persons among us of 60 or 70 years old, ... *discipled to Christ from their childhood,* continue uncorrupted." Observe "*child-hood,*" not from *infancy.* Last Sabbath Morning I baptized two girls, who if they remain stead-fast in the faith till they are 60 or 70 it will be said of them that they "were *discipled to Christ from Child-hood.*"

Can we find infant baptism in the *third* century? Here is the fairest statement that can be made out from history up to Tertullian's day. The idea that *baptism was essential to salvation,* having obtained currency, Quintilla, a wealthy lady wrote to Tertullian, suggesting that if her *offspring asked for baptism,* they ought to have it,—a suggestion plainly implying that at the time she wrote, "child baptism" *did not prevail.* Hers is the *first proposal on record,* that it should be intro-

duced. What was Tertullian's reply? "Those who minister baptism, know very well that it is not to be rashly given." Quintilla had quoted the passage "Give to him that asketh." And Tertullian rejoins; "Give to him that asketh," every one hath a right to it, as a thing of alms! Nay, say rather: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs; cast not your pearls before swine; lay hands suddenly on no man; be not partaker of other men's sins." As the lady had reminded him of Jesus' words, "*Suffer little children to come unto Me*," he answers: "Why is it necessary that *Sponsors*, as well, should be brought into peril, who themselves by death, *may abandon their promises*, or be deceived by a growth of a corrupt disposition? The Lord indeed says, *do not hinder them from coming to Me. Let them come when they are of ripe years, let them come when they understand, when they are taught whither they are coming, let them be made christians when they know Christ.*"

Pedo-baptists are welcome to all the encouragement they can get from the first of the Latin Fathers, Tertullian.

Origen who lived in this century, has been appealed to by Pedo-baptists as favouring infant baptism; but it must be remembered that we have nothing of his writings to refer to. He died about A. D. 254, and we have nothing to refer to but translations of his writings made nearly 200 *years after his death*, by a monk named Rufinus who lived in the 5th century. And this monk of Aquilea is candid enough to acknowledge, that the translation may be considered *as much his own*, as Origen's. In this view agree four great Pedo-baptist historians; Dupin, Erasmus, Wall, and Neander.

"During this century there were few crimes of which Africans were not guilty. Church affairs became so disorderly, and the fiery trials of Christians were so fierce, that not a few lapsed into heathenism. The pius, in order to rescue children from murderous practices of the heathens, *were in the habit of purchasing them*, thus saving their lives and importing them into christian localities. *The children thus rescued, could not partake of the charitable gifts of the church without baptism.*

Cyprian Bishop of Carthage, was written to by Fidus, an

African Prelate,—and apparently Infant-life-preserver in Africa—who having no precedent to guide him, requested to know *how soon babes might be baptized?*

Here *is a clue* to the introduction of *infant baptism.* This was about 40 or 50 years after Tertullian's reply to that wealthy lady Quintilla. What did Cyprian reply to Fidus? Had Cyprian any precedent to guide him in answering Fidus? No. So he called *a council of 66 Bishops* to deliberate and decide *when a babe might be baptized.* And what do you think these men did? They decided that a *babe might be baptized as soon as it could be kissed.* Behold this Cyprian, who was a scholar at the feet of Tertullian,—and who had declared with Tertullian and Origen, *that in Apostolic days none were baptized but those who obeyed Christ,*—Cyprian the man who originated Prelacy,—who, we are told dealt in wonders not only foolish but gross,—who talked of angelic visions and extraordinary legends, who wrote a long essay on the discovery of John the Baptist's head,—who worked on the public mind, almost magically by means of relics,—this Cyprian who spoke of the Lord's Supper as a charm,—this was "the lordly christian" who presided over the council at Carthage,—whose members he himself acknowledged, instead of being examples to the flock, "were covetous, fraudulent and usurious." This was the man who formulated the decision and reasons for its promulgation. Here is the mint where this base coin was struck off, and on it you see his head, and around it "CYPRIAN,—PEDO-BAPTIST THE FIRST, CARTHAGE, A. D. 253."

Now note the *reasons* that council gave for the decree they sent forth. "That the grace of God is denied to none; that as Jesus came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, we ought to do everything in our power to save our fellow men. That God is not a respecter of age more than of persons, and that His grace is equal to all; that the prophet Elisha lay upon a child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands,—*that the spiritual sense of this is that infants are equal to men, but that if you refuse to baptize them, you destroy this equality and are partial;* insomuch *as baptism is a washing away of the sin of human nature,* the sooner it is performed the better, *lest any should die unbaptized, and so perish.*"

From that declaration, it is clear that its authors believed that *baptism was a saving ordinance*, so that infant baptism was really an outgrowth of "*baptismal regeneration.*" And that is the *only reason* those 66 bishops give for baptizing infants. Observe that they make *no appeal* to the *New Testament*; they produce not *one solitary passage* from the *Gospels* or *Epistles*; they point us to not *one precept, command*, or *example* to support their monstrous and impudent mandate. But setting aside the *revealed will of God*, the *plain commands of Christ*, and the *practices of the Apostles*; they of their *free will*, set up an institution, which has been associated with *the darkest errors*, from the day of its origin until now.

"The sign of the *cross* was an early superstition among ancient christians; whatever they were doing—dressing, putting on their shoes, sitting down to meals, wherever they were going, to a feast, or a bath, or to bed, or if from home they returned, they used the sign of the cross. Of course at the baptism of an infant, it was had in requisition. The infant was sometimes immersed thrice, had put into its little mouth milk and honey, and was not only anointed with holy oil, *but had actually administered to it the elements of the "Lord's Supper."* Before Pedo-baptism appeared—or around it when it did appear—the doctrines of baptismal regeneration—of purgatory–of prayers for the dead—of consecration of baptismal water—and the use of Sponsors—as well as a whole host of the most absurd and silly mummeries—all found standing ground."

Let me remind you that, the baptism of infants authorized by Cyprian's council, was not "*infant sprinkling*," but it was "*infant immersion*," as it is in the Greek Church (Russia) today. It was only in cases of *severe sickness* and approaching *death* that "*sprinkling*" was substituted for "*baptism*;" and to show that "sprinkling" even in such emergencies was *not regarded* as an *equivalent* to "baptism," I here quote from a work by two great Pedo-baptists Drs. Storr and Flatt—"Biblical Theology," Article Baptism. "Immersion was so customary in the ancient Church, that even in the *third* century the *baptism of the sick*, who were merely *sprinkled with water*, was *entirely neglected* by some, and by others was *thought inferior to the baptism* of those who were in health, and who re-

ceived baptism not merely by aspersion, but who actually bathed themselves in water. This is evident from Cyprian (Epistle 69., ed. Bremae, p. 185, &c.) and Eusebius (Hist. Eccles., L. VI., cap 43), where we find the following extract from the letter of the Roman bishop Cornelius: "Novatus received baptism on the sick bed by aspersion, *if it can be said that such a person received baptism.*" No person who had during sickness, been baptized by aspersion, was admitted into the clerical office."

The celebrated "Enclyclopedia of religious knowledge," (compiled by Drs. Shaff and Herzog two of the most scholarly pedo-baptists living,) gives us the following.

Article Baptism, "In the primitive church, *baptism was by immersion,* except in the *case of the sick* (clinic baptism) who were baptized by *pouring* or *sprinkling.* These latter were often regarded as *not properly baptized,* either because they had not completed their *catechumenate,* or *the symbolism of the rite was not fully observed,* or because of *the small amount of water* necessarily used. [The twelth canon of the Council of Neo-Cæsarea; (314–325) is: "Whosoever has received clinic baptism, through his own fault, can not become a priest, because he professed his *faith under pressure* (fear of death) and not from *deliberate choice,* unless he greatly excel afterward in zeal and faith, or there is deficiency of other eligible men." Hefele, Conciliengeschichte, Vol. 1., Sec. 17, first edition].

In A. D. 816, the Council of Calcuith (Chelsea, London, Eng.) *forbade the Priests to pour water on upon the infant's heads, but ordered to immerse them.* Hefele, Vol. IV., Sec. 414:— "The Council of Nemours (1284) limited sprinkling to cases of necessity." And Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologica, ¶III., Qu. 66., Art 7, De Baptismo) says: "Although it may be *safer to baptize by immersion,* yet *pouring and sprinkling are also allowable.*" *The Council of Ravenna* (1311) *was the first to allow a choice between sprinkling and immersion* (eleventh canon, Hefele, Vol. VI., Sec. 699); but, at an earlier date (1287), the canons of the Council of the Liege Bishop John, prescribe the way in which the sprinkling of children should be performed. THE PRACTICE FIRST CAME INTO COMMON USE AT THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY, and was favoured by the growing rarity of adult baptism

It is the present practice of the Roman church; but in the *Greek Church Immersion* is insisted on as essential. *Luther* sided with the *immersionists*, described the *baptismal act as an immersion*, and derived Taufe (German for baptism) from tief) ('deep') because what one baptized, he sank tief in the water."

Listen to what our Scotch Friends say from their great seat of learning. "Edinburgh Enclyclopedia,"—Art on baptism—"The first law to sanction aspersion as a mode of baptism, was by Pope Stephen II., A. D. 753. But it was not till the year 1311 that a Council, held at Ravenna, *declared immersion or sprinkling to be indifferent.* In this country (Scotland), *sprinkling was never practiced in ordinary cases till after the Reformation;* and in England, even in the reign of Edward VI., immersion was commonly observed. These Scottish exiles, who had *renounced the authority of the Pope, implicitly acknowledged the authority of Calvin*, and returning to their own country, with John Knox at their head, *in* 1559 *established sprinkling in Scotland.* From Scotland it made its way into England in the reign of Elizabeth, but was *not authorized by the Established Church.* In the Assembly of Divines, held at Westminster 1643, it was keenly debated whether *immersion* or *sprinkling* should be *adopted*: TWENTY-FIVE voted for SPRINKLING and TWENTY-FOUR for IMMERSION; and even that SMALL MAJORITY was attained at the EARNEST REQUEST of Dr. Lightfoot, who had acquired great influence in the assembly."

That is the RECORD of good old Presbyterians, and stands a solid fact to this day, that not all the sophistry of pedo-baptist ministers can explain away.

I could furnish you with a great many more proofs in support of my arguments, from both sacred and profane literature, but time will not permit; and besides I have provided abundantly sufficient to establish the following statements.

First. That neither infant "baptism" nor infant "sprinkling" can be found, as either commanded or practised in the New Testament.

Second. That there cannot be found in any of the Christian writers of the first century, any reference to, or recognition

of, the existence of infant "baptism" or infant "sprinkling" during the first hundred years of Christianity.

Third. That it cannot be proved that the Christian Church approved or practised infant "baptism" or infant "sprinkling" during the second hundred years of Christianity.

Fourth. That Cyprian's Council at Carthage A. D. 253, that represented only the most corrupt section of the Church, was the first authoritative body that decreed that infants might be "baptized" (not sprinkled).

Fifth. That that decree of Cyprian's Council, established the custom to "baptize" infants, in opposition to the revealed will of God, and contrary to the practise of the Apostles. That they did not cite one single verse from the New Testament in the support of their "institution."

Sixth. That though the early christians allowed aspersion to be a substitute in cases of sickness and approaching death, they did not regard it as the equivalent of "Baptism."

Seventh. That not till the year 1311 (at the Council of Ravenna) was the sprinkling of infants sanctioned by the Bishops as being an equivalent to "Baptism."

Eighth. That the whole of the Presbyterian Church, narrowly escaped being Baptists, by a majority of ONE.

Thus I prove to you that "*Infant sprinkling*" is *not a Divine institution*, but a *human tradition.* And the man has not yet arisen who has proved the contrary. It is strange with all their hatred to popery, the evangelical denominations *will not give up this relic of that system.* But the fact that every year *witnesses a decrease* in the number of infants presented to the pastors to be "christened," and the fact that in the United States especially, thousands of members of the pedo-baptist churches have been immersed, and would not unite with those churches unless their pastors immersed them in true apostolic fashion, (In Mount Vernon, my last charge, the Congregational Minister borrowed both my baptistery and my baptizing suit, to immerse two ladies who refused to join his church unless he immersed them), assures me that slowly, but surely the old musty *tradition of infant sprinkling* is being supplanted by the *pure Word of God.*

And moreover the fact that to-day there are on this continent over *three millions* of members in the Baptist churches, to

which may be added *nine millions* more of adherents, making a grand total of about twelve millions who are being trained in the pure faith of the Apostles; and if to these we add *seven hundred thousand* "Disciples," and probable a *million* more in pedo-baptist churches, who have been immersed, we can get some encouragement to believe that, though it may not come to pass in our day, it is probable that the day will arrive when our descendants shall gather around a grave, and with the descendants of our christian friends in other churches, they shall once and forever bury, never to be resurrected, all that has gathered around, all the errors, all the liturgies, and all the apologies, yea, all that belongs to that double word

PEDO-BAPTISM.

Then, and not till then, will the Christrian Church be able to say to the Heathens and to the Catholics, we have

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM."

The Lord hasten that day, Amen and Amen.